

Cancer of the oral cavity

INTRODUCTION

- Cancer of the oral cavity can occur in any part of the mouth (lips, lateral tongue, floor of the mouth most commonly) or throat and is highly curable if discovered early.
- Malignancies of the oral cavity are usually squamous cell cancers and is around 90% of the total cases.

DEFINITION

Oral cancer defined as a uncontrollable growth of the cells or sore in the mouth that does not heal; causes damage to the surrounding tissues of the lips, tongue, cheeks, floor of the mouth, hard and soft palate, sinuses and pharynx and can be life threatening if not diagnosed and treated early.

RISK FACTORS AND ETIOLOGY

- Cigarette, cigar and pipe smoking.
- Use of smokeless tobacco.
- Excessive use of alcohol.
- Oral cancers are often associated with the combined use of alcohol and tobacco.
- Other factors include gender (male), age (older than 50 years).

CLINICAL MANIFESTATIONS

- Typical lesion is a painful indurated ulcer with raised edges.
- As the cancer progresses, patient may complain of tenderness.
- Difficulty in chewing, swallowing or speaking.
- Coughing of blood tinged sputum.
- Enlarged cervical lymph nodes.
- Patches inside mouth or on lips that are a mixture of red and white patches.

- Bleeding in the mouth.
- Loose teeth.

DIAGNOSTIC EVALUATION

- History collection
- Oral examination and physical examination
- Assessment of cervical lymph nodes
- Biopsy- Confirmatory test
- 3D imaging with CT scan and MRI
- Blood test: Laboratory values may be notable for elevated alkaline phosphatase • and possibly an elevation of the WBC count
- Dental X-ray.

MANAGEMENT

- Management varies with the nature of the lesion, preference of the physician, and patient choice.
- Resectional surgery, radiation therapy, chemotherapy, or a combination may be effective.
- Larger lesions may be treated by radiation therapy.



Squamous cell carcinoma of the ventral surface of the tongue.



Squamous cell carcinoma of the lateral tongue.

Advanced squamous cell carcinoma of the posterolateral tongue.

